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# DISABLED PERSONS

**... advocating  
your rights  
in Illinois.**

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**OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS  
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

# A Necessary And Unique Illinois Program

It is easy to say that disabled people are entitled to a fair and equal chance in our society.



It is more difficult to make that chance a reality. Barriers must be removed, and laws prohibiting discrimination against disabled people must be upheld and strengthened.

The Office of the Illinois Attorney General is the first state attorney general's office in the country to have a division concerned solely with the needs and problems of disabled residents.

With staff in our Springfield and Chicago offices and in each of our 19 regional offices located throughout the state, the division uses the law and the powers of the Attorney General to bring the issues of disability rights to the courts, the state and federal legislatures, and the public.

## PRIORITIES OF THE DISABLED PERSONS ADVOCACY DIVISION

Priorities are set by volunteer consumer and attorney advisory councils and include such issues as:

- accessibility of public buildings and transportation
- education and vocational training
- employment
- health and insurance benefits
- voter's rights

## WAYS THE DIVISION SERVES THE DISABLED

- answering individual inquiries or providing referrals to appropriate government agencies or social service organizations
- using the resources of the Attorney General's Office to cut through red tape and expedite solutions
- correcting violations and enforcing laws when necessary
- drafting new legislation and proposing regulations to ensure the rights of disabled persons

## EXAMPLES OF DIVISION SERVICES

- The division intervened in a lawsuit on behalf of more than 30,000 disabled Illinois residents who had their social security and medical benefits wrongfully terminated. These citizens may now be able to collect millions of

dollars a year in benefits they would otherwise not have received.

- The division filed suit against hearing aid retailers who sold defective products and refused to service them. As a result, the retailers gave hundreds of hearing-impaired citizens refunds or service contracts.
- When a major health insurer refused to cover a surgical procedure for a deaf child, the division mediated and settled the matter to the satisfaction of all parties involved.
- The division successfully supported bills before the Illinois legislature to benefit disabled citizens. For example, a new bill establishes a statewide uniform fine for able-bodied persons who park in spaces reserved for disabled people.

## **TWO VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COUNCILS GUIDE THE DIVISION**

- The Consumer Task Force is composed of 40 disability experts, including private citizens and professionals in the fields of developmental disability, physical disabilities, and mental health.
- The Lawyers Advisory Council is composed of 40 attorneys with expertise in various areas of disability law.

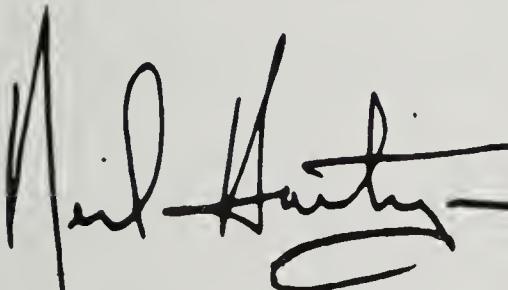
To the People of Illinois:

This brochure has been designed to acquaint you with the range of services and the kinds of help provided by the Disabled Persons Advocacy Division of my office.

This division was created in 1983 to be a force within government to fight for the rights and interests of disabled Illinois citizens.

If you have questions that are not answered in this brochure, or if you have suggestions for making the division more responsive, please contact: Disabled Persons Advocacy Division, Office of the Illinois Attorney General, 174 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60601. Phone: 312-793-5109. The division's toll-free number is 1-800-382-3000, and the TDD number (telecommunication device for the deaf) is 312-793-2852.

Sincerely,



Neil F. Hartigan  
Attorney General



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# Our Main Goal Is To Serve You

The Office of the Attorney General is charged by the Illinois Constitution, state statute, case law and our common law heritage with representing all the citizens of this state as their attorney.

## **OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OFFICES**

500 S. Second Street  
Springfield 62706  
217-782-1090

100 West Randolph Street  
Chicago 60601  
312-917-3000